

**INTERNATIONAL LONGSHORE AND WAREHOUSE UNION**  
**PACIFIC COAST PENSIONERS ASSOCIATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**  
**LABOR ARCHIVES OF WASHINGTON**  
**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON LIBRARIES SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**  
**CHRISTINE GORDON OF ILWU LOCAL 13, LOCAL 63, PCPA**

**INTERVIEWEE:** CHRISTINE GORDON

**INTERVIEWERS:** HARVEY SCHWARTZ

**SUBJECTS:** ILWU LOCAL 13; LOCAL 63; OCAW; IBU; LONG BEACH, CA; ILWU LOCAL 63; GRIEVANCES; MISOGYNY; COMPUTERIZATION

**LOCATION:** 2014 PCPA CONVENTION VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

**DATE:** DECEMBER 14, 2014

**INTERVIEW LENGTH:** 00:41:24

**FILE NAME:** GordonChristine\_PCPA\_2014\_Video\_acc6194-002.mp4

[00:00:00] **HARVEY SCHWARTZ:** This is Harvey Schwartz, and I'm with Christine Gordon. This is December 14, 2014. We're in Vancouver. This is part of the Pacific Coast Pension Association Oral History Project. Christine, let me ask you when you were born, where you were born. A little bit about growing up.

[00:00:36] **CHRISTINE GORDON:** That's fine. I was born in Hollywood, California in 1944. Grew up in the South Bay area, except for a short time lived in [Santa] Catalina Island [California] .

[00:00:54] **HARVEY:** You lived in Catalina Island?

[00:00:56] **CHRISTINE:** Yes. My father had a milk business over there.

[00:00:59] **HARVEY:** What kind of business?

[00:01:00] **CHRISTINE:** Milk. The milk would come over on the steamer, and the longshoremen actually lived on Catalina Island. They would come out. They would meet the steamer, take off the stores, and then put them in the back of my father's truck. We delivered milk all over the island.

[00:01:21] **HARVEY:** My goodness. Was your dad political, and was he involved in unions at all?

[00:01:26] **CHRISTINE:** No, he was not.

[00:01:31] **HARVEY:** Do you know what countries they came from in Europe, their background?

[00:01:38] **CHRISTINE:** Yes, my father's father, he came from Scotland. His mother was from England. On my mother's side, that was French and some Scots on that side, too.

[00:02:03] **HARVEY:** What's it like growing up on Catalina Island? How long were you there?

[00:02:08] **CHRISTINE:** I was there for about four years.

[00:02:11] **HARVEY:** Ok, so you were just a little child then.

[00:02:12] **CHRISTINE:** Well, I was about 10 to 14.

[00:02:18] **HARVEY:** Oh, 10 to 14, okay.

[00:02:20] **CHRISTINE:** It was a little tough.

[00:02:22] **HARVEY:** How so?

[00:02:24] **CHRISTINE:** Well, it's like Hawai'i. You're not accepted right away. You have to prove yourself. They were islanders, and I was a new islander. As long as you could swim—and we used to dive for coins at that time. I learned how to swim very fast.

[00:02:48] **HARVEY:** My goodness. In the [Hawai'ian] islands, there's an ethnic aspect to it at times. If you're a new person, that's one thing; but if you're also a haole [of European descent] , as they call them in islands—

[00:03:01] **CHRISTINE:** This was in Catalina Island.

[00:03:03] **HARVEY:** No, I know, but was there any ethnic difference?

[00:03:07] **CHRISTINE:** It wasn't ethnic; it was mostly family.

[00:03:10] **HARVEY:** Families and culture, and they'd been there a long time.

[00:03:12] **CHRISTINE:** Yes.

[00:03:14] **HARVEY:** How come you left when you were 14 years old?

[00:03:16] **CHRISTINE:** My father got a promotion, and he became manager of the Arden Farms business [now, Gelson's Markets] in Inglewood [California] . It was a promotion for him.

[00:03:29] **HARVEY:** So now you're back in Hollywood or Inglewood?

[00:03:32] **CHRISTINE:** No, we actually were in Harbor City, which is close to San Pedro and Lomita.

[00:03:40] **HARVEY:** Right, right. What's it like growing up there?

[00:03:43] **CHRISTINE:** It was good. We were middle class. My mother wasn't working. My father worked all the time. It was a good life.

[00:03:54] **HARVEY:** Any political life at all in the family?

[00:03:57] **CHRISTINE:** No.

[00:04:05] **HARVEY:** You went to college, I gather, after high school?

[00:04:08] **CHRISTINE:** I went to Chapman College and then went to junior college at Harbor College. Then I went up to UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles] to their dental assistant program.

[00:04:20] **HARVEY:** Really?

[00:04:21] **CHRISTINE:** Yes.

[00:04:23] **HARVEY:** Did you graduate from the dental assistantship program?

[00:04:25] **CHRISTINE:** Yes, I did. I went right to work.

[00:04:29] **HARVEY:** As what, a dental assistant?

[00:04:31] **CHRISTINE:** For a periodontist. He had just gotten out of USC [University of Southern California]. He went to UCLA, and it was a good school, and he wanted to know who had scored the highest. I had scored the highest, and I was in the South Bay, so we had a partnership.

[00:04:48] **HARVEY:** I'll be darned, okay. Now is this around the time you got married?

[00:04:53] **CHRISTINE:** Yes.

[00:04:54] **HARVEY:** Did you get married to that fellow or somebody else?

[00:04:56] **CHRISTINE:** No, I did, to the gentleman I married in college. Dennis Butler. We had a child. I worked days, and my mother helped me with my son. It worked out for nine years.

[00:05:20] **HARVEY:** This was not the periodontist?

[00:05:21] **CHRISTINE:** This was the periodontist.

[00:05:27] **HARVEY:** What happened after you got divorced?

[00:05:31] **CHRISTINE:** I decided that I didn't have good benefits. Dentistry at that time, there were no benefits. I decided that I wanted most of all to have good benefits so it would take care of my son and I. Because my ex-husband went on to school. I had been putting him through school part of the time, so he went on to get his master's and his doctorate. My boss, the periodontist, wanted to put me through hygiene school, and then I would have to sign something to work for him for 10 years. I couldn't do that. I couldn't have that commitment. I needed benefits, and they weren't there.

[00:06:22] **HARVEY:** I might have gotten one thing a little bit off track. The guy you worked for was different from your husband? They were different folks?

[00:06:28] **CHRISTINE:** Oh yes! Yes, yes.

[00:06:33] **HARVEY:** What year is this, approximately?

[00:06:34] **CHRISTINE:** I started working for him in '64 and left in about '71, '72.

[00:06:49] **HARVEY:** What did you do next? To get something with benefits, and to get a better situation for you and your son?

[00:06:56] **CHRISTINE:** My friend said, "They need a dispatcher-secretary at the Inlandboatmen's Union [IBU] ." I said, "The what?" She said, "They have good benefits." "I'll go down and interview." When I saw where it was, in Wilmington [, California] , and not a very good section, I said, well, I'll go in and talk to them. And they hired me! I didn't know if I wanted the job because I came from a very nice office that I had worked in. But I learned very quickly that my most important job that I had was to make sure that the people that were there to be dispatched were up for the job that came in. It was a very responsible job. I really did like it. I liked it a lot.

[00:07:48] **HARVEY:** How long did you do that?

[00:07:51] **CHRISTINE:** I was there about five years. Part of that time, I was going to school at night learning seamanship and sailing. I got my ordinary seaman's papers. I was also going out at night and riding on the barges and tugboats with friends that I dispatched, of course. And, decided that that's what I wanted to do.

[00:08:20] **HARVEY:** Why did that appeal to you more than continuing to be a secretary?

[00:08:22] **CHRISTINE:** Money. It was money.

[00:08:25] **HARVEY:** Paid more.

[00:08:25] **CHRISTINE:** Yes, yes, and it was much more exciting. It turned out to be a very hard job. It was very dangerous.

[00:08:37] **HARVEY:** Can you describe why it was hard, and why it was dangerous?

[00:08:40] **CHRISTINE:** The responsibility—I was working on the barges. At that time, the fuel barges were the big thing in the harbor because all the ships came there to get fuel because it was much cheaper. When I wasn't working on the tugboats, when I wasn't working on the Catalina boats, I was on barges. We used to have to go out on the barges by way of tugboat and then jump from there onto the barges. It was very dangerous. Just being on a barge in the weather. The hours were very long. I know, it was a very frightening time in my life, but it just seemed to make sense to me that I should be there.

[00:09:40] **HARVEY:** What did you do with your son at that time when you were working these long hours?

[00:09:44] **CHRISTINE:** My mother was very supportive.

[00:09:46] **HARVEY:** Your mom was helping you.

[00:09:46] **CHRISTINE:** Yes.

[00:09:51] **HARVEY:** How many women were involved in the IBU at that time?

[00:09:54] **CHRISTINE:** There had been one that didn't last there very long. Then I came on the job, and there was another girl who didn't stay very long.

It was interesting because the people that I had dispatched on these jobs were the same people that I worked with. So I kind of knew what was going on. Even though it's hard for women to break into typically men's jobs, they were pretty good to me. Not always, but . . .

[00:10:32] **HARVEY:** When you say "not always," can you expand on that, a little bit?

[00:10:40] **CHRISTINE:** They had had all these tugboats and the barges just to—they were all men. When I first went out there, they had pictures on the walls. I did have to say something about them. Sometimes it went over well, and sometimes it didn't.

[00:11:03] **HARVEY:** Do you remember any incidents, any particular situation that was memorable for better or for worse?

[00:11:10] **CHRISTINE:** Yes, there was somebody that said some things, and . . .

[00:11:18] **HARVEY:** How did you deal with that?

[00:11:19] **CHRISTINE:** Well, I asked him to please not say what he said. It was about the kind of body, and body parts, and I asked him not to say anything. We had bunks there because sometimes we were out there for such long hours. I finally had to say to him, if he wasn't quiet about these things, that I would have to put my fist right through his nose. I guess he got it. Whether I would ever do it or not. . . [closes eyes] I was pretty strong then. Very strong.

[00:11:56] **HARVEY:** Determined, I presume.

[00:11:57] **CHRISTINE:** Yes, yes.

[00:11:59] **HARVEY:** Anything else like that that occurred that you recall?

[00:12:03] **CHRISTINE:** There were a few things, but a lot of it kind of just rolled off. It wasn't like that one incident. That was really pretty ugly. He respected me after that! [laughs]

[00:12:16] **HARVEY:** Sometimes that's how it comes down. What about the pictures? Did they take some of those pictures down?

[00:12:24] **CHRISTINE:** They did. They kind of figured after a while that this was going to be a job that there were going to be more women coming. Even though there wasn't a lot of talk about discrimination and all that, I think the company got wind of it all.

[00:12:42] **HARVEY:** How long did you do that work?

[00:12:49] **CHRISTINE:** I did that until the SIU [Seafarers International Union] came into the harbor. When the SIU came into the harbor, they raided the IBU and took all the jobs on the tugboats, the Catalina boats, the barges, and left 120 people out of a job.

[00:13:09] **HARVEY:** And you were one of them?

[00:13:11] **CHRISTINE:** And I was one of them.

[00:13:12] **HARVEY:** That's 1978? '77, '78?

[00:13:18] **CHRISTINE:** Yes. Because then I was getting a couple jobs out of what they called at [ILWU] Local 13 "the meat locker." Because we didn't have jobs, any extra jobs that came down, we'd go over and they'd give us jobs. I did that for a while.

[00:13:41] **HARVEY:** What was your first day on the job like working in the "meat locker" jobs?

[00:13:49] **CHRISTINE:** You mean out of the hall?

[00:13:51] **HARVEY:** Out of 13. Do you remember the first day?

[00:13:54] **CHRISTINE:** Oh yes. I was working on the dock, and there was four swingmen. One of them happened to be my next door neighbor. Instead of trying to help me to learn what I needed to do, he just abandoned me. At that time, they were working four and four, because the work was harder. After lunch, when I came back, I was the only one there.

[00:14:31] **HARVEY:** Really?

[00:14:32] **CHRISTINE:** Yes, and then someone else came. I think they were making a little bit of a stand.

[00:14:40] **HARVEY:** How many people were normally required to work?

[00:14:43] **CHRISTINE:** Four.

[00:14:44] **HARVEY:** Oh, you mentioned, it's a four on and four off situation. What was work like itself?

[00:14:49] **CHRISTINE:** Since I had been doing physical work, it wasn't hard. It was just that I needed to know safety more than anything. Where I could stand. The trucks were coming in, where they had to be staged. Unlocking, taking off cones. Just safety more than anything else.

[00:15:18] **HARVEY:** Why was it called "the meat locker"?

[00:15:22] **CHRISTINE:** They didn't have a casual law at that time. So if they had extra work, and our union was in trouble, then they would give jobs out of this small room. They called it "the meat locker."

[00:15:38] **HARVEY:** So this is regular longshore work, basically?

[00:15:40] **CHRISTINE:** Yes.

[00:15:43] **HARVEY:** Ok, just to go back, so there's nobody there. What do you do? You're the only person. How do you deal with it?

[00:15:51] **CHRISTINE:** I think part of it was a little bit of a scare tactic. "We don't want women down here."

[00:15:57] **HARVEY:** Sure, no, I know that. How did you manage the work the rest of the day?

[00:16:01] **CHRISTINE:** Well, someone did come a little later.

[00:16:04] **HARVEY:** One person came.

[00:16:04] **CHRISTINE:** Yes. And this was at night, also.

[00:16:10] **HARVEY:** Oh, yes. So that's the first day. [laughs]

[00:16:16] **CHRISTINE:** Yes. Shortly after that, I got a job with Exxon Oil Company. It wasn't ExxonMobil. I got a Class A license and was driving a truck. I was fueling the ships from the dock because that's what they used to do. I was climbing tanks and measuring the level of the oil. Those 55 gallon drums were pretty heavy. But we had to—you would break them over; it was really a technique. Then we had to roll them off the truck to be put on the ships.

[00:17:03] **HARVEY:** How'd you get that job?

[00:17:05] **CHRISTINE:** There was a gentleman that told me that they were hiring. I had worked with him with the IBU. He said, "Well, there's a job there." Affirmative action, of course, had opened up. I was hired. It was a good job, especially because they had stock options.

[00:17:33] **HARVEY:** How long did you drive truck?

[00:17:39] **CHRISTINE:** Well, I not only drove truck there with the tanker and the stake truck, then when I got into the union, since I had a Class A license, I could drive the vehicles there. I eventually let that lapse.

[00:17:54] **HARVEY:** When you say "the union," was this the Teamsters union?

[00:17:59] **CHRISTINE:** No, it's the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers Union [OCAWU] . It was a good union. I did a lot of work with them.

[00:18:12] **HARVEY:** Were you active at all, at that point?

[00:18:14] **CHRISTINE:** Yes, yes. But then Exxon moved out of the West Coast. So there I was. They hadn't pulled out completely, but someone told me, "You should go down to the drive-in because they're taking applications for longshoring." I went down. At that time the testing was a little different than it is now. I went to work down there—I scored high enough that I went to work down there.

[00:18:54] **HARVEY:** What year is this by now?

[00:18:56] **CHRISTINE:** It was '82. What happened was I was still working with the union, and I was an officer in the OCAWU.

[00:19:07] **HARVEY:** Oh, you were?

[00:19:08] **CHRISTINE:** I just felt like I couldn't leave them completely, so I stayed with them until Exxon was gone. At that time, it was hiring again. I put in another application, and I was hired in the hiring process with the ILWU.

[00:19:31] **HARVEY:** When did you get active—well, it's kind of clear about when you got active. What made you get active in the oil, chemical workers union? Why did you get active?

[00:19:40] **CHRISTINE:** Because I could see that this is the one reason why I started doing the jobs in labor, because of the benefits and the things that the union, if we all stuck together, we could accomplish. That was the most important thing because I was still raising my son by myself.

[00:20:00] **HARVEY:** Were there more men than women?

[00:20:06] **CHRISTINE:** Oh, yes. You mean in the oil workers union? Yes.

[00:20:15] **HARVEY:** How come you got elected to office? You said you were elected to office.

[00:20:16] **CHRISTINE:** I was on the executive board.

[00:20:16] **HARVEY:** What did you do to get elected there?

[00:20:24] **CHRISTINE:** I just told them that I wanted to run for the office. Since I had been with the IBU, I had had some experience. I got voted in. Now the OCAW is no longer, and that was one of the biggest unions at that time.

[00:20:44] **HARVEY:** Yes, I know it was at one time.

[00:20:46] **CHRISTINE:** Very sad. So, again, I was very, very fortunate that I could move into another union job.

[00:20:55] **HARVEY:** You're in the ILWU; it's about '82?

[00:20:56] **CHRISTINE:** That was '84, '85.

[00:20:57] **HARVEY:** Ok, so you're in the ILWU.

[00:21:01] **CHRISTINE:** That was in Local 13. I later transferred to Local 63.

[00:21:22] **HARVEY:** When did you transfer to 63?

[00:21:31] **CHRISTINE:** It was '87.

[00:21:38] **HARVEY:** Tell me what it's like being in Local 13.

[00:21:42] **CHRISTINE:** When I transferred to 63, it was in '87.

[00:21:44] **HARVEY:** No, I understand. In Local 13, tell me about your first experiences there.

[00:21:56] **CHRISTINE:** It was actually very good. I'd had more experience. When I was working for Exxon, and I was on the docks all the time working side by side with the ILWU, because we would be fueling from the



pipeline that was under all the docks in Long Beach. So I got to know a lot of people. It actually was quite a good transition going over there.

[00:22:25] **HARVEY:** What I'm looking for is any difficulties or stories with men rejecting the idea that you were there now?

[00:22:31] **CHRISTINE:** They're always—they're still there. It's the same. But it was different. I did my job, and, if I was questioned about 'what was I doing down there, I should be home,' I said, "I'm doing the same thing you're doing. I'm trying to raise a family." That seemed to work really well, to point out the fact that I was there to make a living. Not to take somebody's job, but to make a living and support a family.

[00:23:04] **HARVEY:** Do you remember any incidents or stories specifically around those kinds of issues?

[00:23:08] **CHRISTINE:** Not really.

[00:23:16] **HARVEY:** Nothing recurred like how it occurred before?

[00:23:20] **CHRISTINE:** There were things said, but by that time it just kind of rolled off. I had some good support down there.

[00:23:31] **HARVEY:** There've been some lawsuits around women coming into Local 13 at some point [*Golden v. Pacific Maritime Association*]. Was that earlier than when you come in, in '82?

[00:23:45] **CHRISTINE:** When I came back in in '85, they said that the highest-scoring women at that time would go into the clerks union. Right away and not to go in Local 13. My friend Helena and I scored the highest because she was an ironworker, and I had the experience that I had. There were other women that scored high also. For some reason, that got changed.

It was a political thing. They decided to just draw out of a hat and not take the highest-scoring women. We were then put into Local 13. I had written letters to the International, and I just figured at that time that it wasn't right. I had tried everything that I could try, and when none of that worked, I actually filed [a lawsuit]. It was not for money; there was no money at all. In fact, for myself, it cost a lot of money to do this. Nothing to the ILWU. After a while, there was a ruling, and we got the jobs in Local 63.

[00:25:19] **HARVEY:** So you were trying to get into Local 63? That's what the suit was saying.

[00:25:21] **CHRISTINE:** Right, because that's what they originally had told us. We quit our jobs thinking that we were going into Local 63. Some of the women, really they didn't want to go into 13 at all. For me, I could do either job. But it was the fact that the decision was made, and then the right people didn't score high enough—that was my opinion only—so it went to draw out of a hat.

[00:25:58] **HARVEY:** Okay, interesting. You brought suit right after that, mid-1980s? Is that when you brought suit?

[00:26:08] **CHRISTINE:** Yes, yes.

[00:26:11] **HARVEY:** Was Helena also party to that same suit?

[00:26:13] **CHRISTINE:** Oh, yes.

[00:26:14] **HARVEY:** How many other women?

[00:26:17] **CHRISTINE:** There were eight of us. One woman decided she didn't want any part of it after, and she went back to school.

[00:26:29] **HARVEY:** And the suit was settled about 1987?

[00:26:34] **CHRISTINE:** Yes, approximately.

[00:26:38] **HARVEY:** How many of those eight women ended up in Local 13?

[00:26:43] **CHRISTINE:** We all got into Local 63.

[00:26:46] **HARVEY:** All seven did eventually?

[00:26:48] **CHRISTINE:** Yes.

[00:26:53] **HARVEY:** Any work stories at all that you remember that are good from during that period when you worked out of Local 13? Like a day on the job or what's going on there. Did you also at that time get active in the locals?

[00:27:11] **CHRISTINE:** At that time, I did not. There were a lot of people very angry about the fact these women decided to fight for what they thought was right. But the good times down there, where we worked as a team. Whether we're working with the men or other women, we were all responsible for each other. I really liked that because it was a really dangerous job. The first year I was down there, I actually lost three friends.

[00:27:52] **HARVEY:** Really? Were you lashing?

[00:27:56] **CHRISTINE:** I lashed, yes. Well, they were killed, crushed. One gentleman, early in the morning, slipped on some oil because they had just come in and it was damp. He died falling all the way down through all the lashings. Another gentleman—what they used to put boats on, like a cradle, fell on him. I had to tell his wife. And he had two babies.

The heartache in things like that was tremendous, but, of course, when somebody gets killed, things get changed. There were more safety rules. They had to tie off when they were up top. There were a lot of safety rules that came only after people had died. They gave their lives, but a lot of people's lives were saved.

We had a group that was very good. Once we all got working together, whether it was out of 13 or 63, people really did watch out for each other.

[00:29:15] **HARVEY:** That's good. So, you went into 63 in 1987. Describe what you did at 63, if you don't mind.

[00:29:26] **CHRISTINE:** I was a clerk. I would be accountable for loading and unloading the ships. Then computerization came in. That was a whole different thing, so, instead of being outside all the time, a lot of

times we were inside. Most of that time, I worked nights. That way, when my son had games and things like that, then I could participate in things like that.

[00:29:59] **HARVEY:** What's your son doing in the long run? What does he do?

[00:30:03] **CHRISTINE:** My son went to college and became a longshoreman. He was doing that and going to school up in Chico [, California] , but, when he came down, he had a casual card. He would go to work. He went into the business field and worked there about a year. Told me, "Mom, I know you spent a lot of money. But," he said, "I have two children, the second one on its way. I think my place is down working as a longshoreman."

[00:30:36] **HARVEY:** Is that what he's still doing?

[00:30:38] **CHRISTINE:** He's a boss down there now for quite some time. Very proud of him. He's a good boss.

[00:30:43] **HARVEY:** Yes, that's great. I'll bet. How amazing.

Did you have an A-card by the time you went into Local 63?

[00:30:53] **CHRISTINE:** Yes.

[00:30:54] **HARVEY:** You had a B-card initially?

[00:30:56] **CHRISTINE:** Mm-hmm. But it wasn't the same back then. Back then, it went very fast. Not like now you have to be a B-book for five years. Those rules weren't in place back then.

[00:31:10] **HARVEY:** You may have come along at the point when the southern California port was still growing. Maybe so, it's possible. That's why those opportunities are more plentiful, when the membership's growing, if it happens to be doing that.

So you go into 63. How long are you in Local 63?

[00:31:41] **CHRISTINE:** Over twenty years.

[00:31:41] **HARVEY:** When'd you retire? That's fairly recent.

[00:31:46] **CHRISTINE:** I retired in 2010 with 26 good years down there.

[00:31:52] **HARVEY:** Yes, yes. Oh my goodness. Can you go a little more into the transition between the old style of clerking and the computerization? When you came in, you're still doing it in what way?

[00:32:06] **CHRISTINE:** By hand! We wrote everything when we were bringing in the outside truckers. Everything was handwritten. We would actually sit outside on a bench, or they had little houses for us to sit in. The truckers would give us their information, and we would write it down and tell them where to go. Everything was done manually back then.

[00:32:37] **HARVEY:** Containerization is just close to there by then, isn't it?

[00:32:44] **CHRISTINE:** Yes. Well, they were picking up containers.

[00:32:46] **HARVEY:** They were picking up containers, actually, okay.

[00:32:49] **CHRISTINE:** Yes. Some jobs, like the fruit jobs at the fruit dock. The outside drivers would come in. The Teamsters were there. They loaded the trucks, and we worked in the warehouse, counting pallets and making sure they got the right amount. Everything was done manually.

Then the computer age came in, and so that was a new thing to learn.

[00:33:23] **HARVEY:** Any difficulty learning that?

[00:33:26] **CHRISTINE:** Well, I wasn't really very savvy on computers. It was just a work-in-progress. As things changed, we changed, and we got to know more all the time.

[00:33:41] **HARVEY:** Did you get active in the union in Local 63?

[00:33:43] **CHRISTINE:** No, I did not. I was there to support the officers, so I guess I was active. I went to all the meetings. I supported it, but it was not the time for me to get involved in the offices. There was still a little bit of a grudge there. Even then.

[00:34:08] **HARVEY:** Even then.

[00:34:08] **CHRISTINE:** Yes. But I was always in support of what they did.

[00:34:21] **HARVEY:** When you say there was a little bit of a grudge, do you want to expand on that at all? Any incidents you recall, difficulties you recall? You don't have to name names if you don't want to. I notice you're reluctant to do that, which is understandable.

[00:34:34] **CHRISTINE:** Because it was my name that was on the lawsuit, they remembered who I was more than anybody else. There were little things said once in a while. Some people understood it. Some people didn't want to understand it. That was the hard part because I knew what I had done was correct. I knew where I'd come from. I'd come from many unions before the ILWU, and I was just standing up for what was my right. I was still making a living, and I was happy about it. If I could do something, I was there to volunteer.

[00:35:28] **HARVEY:** I understand. It's been four years now since you retired.

[00:35:34] **CHRISTINE:** Almost five.

[00:35:34] **HARVEY:** Almost five. What do you do in retirement?

[00:35:41] **CHRISTINE:** I travel. I like to travel. When I retired and became a Pensioner, I thought this may be the time that I can give back more than I ever have. I got active with the Pensioners. Some of the people that were the Pensioners along with me were some of the people that had really given me a hard time. But at that point, it didn't matter because we were all one. We were all people that had fought the battle, and now we could enjoy our retirement. I felt like I needed to get involved.

[00:36:25] **HARVEY:** What do you do for the Pensioners? Have you held any offices locally?

[00:36:30] **CHRISTINE:** No, I've been on the executive board. We have a lot of functions that we put on, and I try to do as much as I can.

We just had a parade, and Helena and I actually led the Pensioners with holding a sign for a mile-and-a-half walking down Avalon Boulevard. We were very proud. She said to me today, "That was really kind of an epic moment for us, wasn't it?" I said, "Yes. Because we know where our hearts were the whole time."

[00:37:11] **HARVEY:** What was the parade over?

[00:37:12] **CHRISTINE:** The Labor Day parade.

[00:37:13] **HARVEY:** It was this Labor Day?

[00:37:14] **CHRISTINE:** Yes.

[00:37:14] **HARVEY:** Just a little while back.

[00:37:15] **CHRISTINE:** Yes. We've been in it before. One time we drove a little crazy car and had signs for "No on Proposition 32." We do what we can.

[00:37:29] **HARVEY:** Yes, yes. I think you kind of covered it, but anything else meaningful about the Pensioners' Association? I don't mean to dictate any response, but anything extra special about it beyond what you've—

[00:37:50] **CHRISTINE:** Absolutely. I've met some people that have—we've become very good friends. A couple of the guys I go to church with. Now I've got to know their wives and their families—and come to these events like we're having right now. It's kind of gotten to be another family. A different family, but this is family.

I've traveled a lot, and I'm very proud to say that I'm a pensioner from the longshoremen's union. No matter where you go in this world, a lot of people know who the longshoremen are. How powerful they are, and they've made a lot of people's lives a lot better. Maintaining that we have a middle class—that they don't have [in some places of the world] .

[00:38:53] **HARVEY:** Anything you'd care to add, anything looking back? You've outlined things pretty well, but have I missed anything? Is there something you'd like to add?

[00:39:06] **CHRISTINE:** I was the only one from my family that started in the ILWU. Now I have my son down there, and his wife is down there. I'm very proud of that.

[00:39:19] **HARVEY:** That's great. You say his wife is down there?

[00:39:21] **CHRISTINE:** Yes, she's in Local 13.

[00:39:23] **HARVEY:** Oh, she's also in Local 13! Oh my goodness.

[00:39:28] **CHRISTINE:** My grandson just won the Harry Bridges Award for an essay because he's started college. He got a monetary prize for that, an award. Because he wrote the story of Harry Bridges.

[00:39:46] **HARVEY:** That's wonderful.

[00:39:49] **CHRISTINE:** We're now a union family.

[00:39:50] **HARVEY:** Indeed. What did you parents think, way back, when you first went into the labor side?

[00:40:00] **CHRISTINE:** My father died at 51, so he didn't actually see. My mother just shook her head and said, "I do not know what you're doing this for." Just couldn't understand it all. After a while, she understood because she knew that I was happy doing what I was doing. She died about 10 years ago now.

[00:40:29] **HARVEY:** She got to see you do a lot of these things.

[00:40:34] **CHRISTINE:** Yes, she still shook her head, but she knew that I had made some right choices. She didn't ever see that in her era, that women did this kind of work.

[00:40:49] **HARVEY:** Yes, exactly.

[00:40:52] **CHRISTINE:** The union has been good to me. Now I can enjoy the fact that I can help my grandkids out with college and that I'm traveling a lot. I'm very thankful.

[00:41:12] **HARVEY:** Thank you for the interview. Much appreciated.

[00:41:14] **CHRISTINE:** Thank you. I think this is a great opportunity.

[00:41:18] **HARVEY:** Well, gee, thank you. That's nice to know.